the United States in the first week of December.

(c) Government of India regularly reviews all developments which may have a bearing on India's security. Government will continue to take all measures necessary to safeguard India's national interests.

Indian help to Afghan Government

551. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Afghan Government headed by Mr. Rabbani had sought India's help to curb Pakistan's ISI activities supporting the Taliban regime;

(b) if so, in what terms such request was made and in what context Government was approached; and

(c) Government reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) The Government of Afghanistan has kept India informed of Pakistan's unabated interference in Afghanistan. They have also made it extensively known to the international community. Dr. A. Abdullah, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan during his address at the 53rd Session of the UN General Assembly on September 29, 1998, referred to an evil collusion between the Pakistani Military Intelligence Service (ISI), the Taliban and international terrorism and drug trafficking. During a hearing of the US Senate Foreign Relations Sub-Committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs on October 8, 1998, Dr. A. Abdullah said that, apart from receiving military logistics, fuel and arms from Pakistan, more than 28,000 Pakistani citizens including paramilitary personnel and military advisers formed part of the Taliban occupation forces in various parts of Afghanistan. He also added that aircrafts from Pakistan participated in bombing Bamyan city in Afghanistan in August this year. The leaders of the Government of Afghanistan have repeatedly said that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. The withdrawal of foreign military and armed personnel, political dialogue aimed at achieving a lasting political settlement of the conflict, and the formation of a fully representative, broad-based, multi-ethnic government would ensure a lasting peace in Afghanistan and the entire region. Government of India has been sending humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan both bilaterally and through the UN.

Plutonium Plant in Pakistan

552. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the Indian Express of August 2, 1998, captioned "Pakistan's plutonium plant goes critical", reporting that Pakistan's transition to a plutonium producing nuclear weapons State was soon to become a reality; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction to the 50-70MW Khushab reactor having gone critical, by way of raising matching capability in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has been closely monitoring and continuously assessing the nuclear capability of Pakistan. India has a large, diversified and advanced nuclear programme geared to meeting India's developmental and security challenges. Government remains fully committed to effectively safeguarding the country's security in keeping with its assessment of the national security requirements.

Visit of US President

553. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: